

The Board of Directors of the Calverton Citizens Association has voted to join the Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission and Prince Georges County in their suit to oppose construction of the proposed Law Enforcement Training Center on federally-owned land that is currently part of the 2,000 acre Department of Agriculture Research Farm. (See The OUTLOOK, March, 1972.)

The vote by members present was overwhelmingly in favor of the motion that "CCA request that the . . . Park and Planning Commission represent it in suit against the Federal Government because we are citizens of Prince Georges County and as such are concerned about utilization of land within that County."

Board Member Don Margolies summed up the reasons for CCA support of the suit by noting that "we are in a time when . . . if we don't take stock of the land around us and see what should be conserved and that should be removed, we are going to be in very serious trouble. Once the land is taken we can never get it back."

He continued, "There are those who contend that Calverton ends at Powder Mill Road and that CCA shouldn't go past Powder Mill Road (in its concern), because what happens beyond doesn't affect Calverton directly.

"The argument is fallacious because what happens there does affect Calverton . . . If they set a precedent by using that land, that precedent could affect Calverton directly one day. For that reason, the Board should take a forward-looking point of view and join the County in its suit."

Prior to the vote, MNCPPC Associate General Counsel David Freishtat, who happens to be a Calverton resident, presented the pertinent facts of the suit to the Board at its April meeting. Freishtat is Co-Counsel in the action.

He stated that the primary objection to the proposed Center is that General Services Administration, which would oversee construction for the Center, has not complied with the Environmental Protection Act enacted by Congress.

The Act requires that an environmental impact statement be submitted for all proposed Government construction. The suit contends that the statement filed is instead an economic statement which describes job generation and financial benefit for the surrounding area but which takes no cognizance of the physical effect that the center would have on that area.

It is also believed that the Federal Government must comply with an executive Order

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CCA to Join MNCPPC In Law Training Center Suit

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requiring that all new Federal installations comply with local master plans.

As presently planned, it has not. The 500-acre tract east of the Baltimore-Washington Parkway and north of Powder Mill Road has always been open space, and the master plans for the surroundings areas, South Laurel, Glendale - Seabrook, Fairland - Beltsville, and Greenbelt - College Park, are all based on the Research Farm's remaining undeveloped.

It is feared that development of that section of Farm property would destroy the counted-on ratio of densely populated area open space.

(A proposed Government use of Farm land for a Food and Drug Administration facility at the north end of the Farm on the west side of the parkway is unopposed by the County because it would complement the town center of South Laurel.)

Attendant problems not mentioned in the Government's "Impact Statement" would be sewage, traffic, and noise generation. WSSC has not granted GSA a sewer hookup, so their intention is either to build their own treatment plant on the site or connect to the one presently used by the Agriculture buildings.

Park and Planning contends that the first alternative is un-

satisfactory because of the limited assimilative capacity of the streams that would be involved. The Center location is at the top of the watershed area for several streams that are tributaries of the Anacostia and the Patuxant Rivers. Because the volume and rate of stream flow is not as great at the heads of the streams as it is farther downstream -- they are even dry during periods of drought -- the effluent would be nearly undiluted as it passed the numerous parks and recreation areas below.

Objection to using the facility presently used by Agriculture is that it was never designed to serve the additional 2,000 persons who would be living on the Training Center site while studying there.

The increased traffic on the area road systems, the increased noise, and the loss of trees render the planned use incompatible with surrounding land use, the County contends.

Freishtat stated that Park and Planning is willing to represent local civic groups that wish to join the suit or that the groups can be represented by someone of their own choice.

(The County sitting as the District Council represents the people and can therefore wishing to become party to their action by filing a pleading

stating that a given group wishes to intervene (join).

Other area groups that have voted to join are the Oakland Civic Association, the West Laurel Citizens Association, and the Isaac Walton League; the Sierra Club is considering intervention also.

During the discussion that followed Freishtat's presentation it was asked whether the Government has indicated what other plans it may have for use of Farm land. Freishtat answered that even though the County has been told that the Center will be the only such use, that the assurance has no binding force and that there is no master plan on record determining the use of the Farm area.

It was also asked whether an issue in the suit which could become more important than any other might be the right of a state or local government to tell the Federal Government what it can or cannot do with its land. The idea was expressed that if won, the case might be a milestone.